

The Times They Are A Changin'

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Summary: Bucky Barnes and Steve Rogers have always been the best of friends through thick and thin, but in the wake of the Winter Soldier's rehabilitation, something in their relationship begins to shift. It all begins with a wedding. Fluff. Post AoU, pre-CW. Stucky.

1. It Began with a Wedding

****Author's Note:**** Well, I've been bit hard by the Marvel bug of late, what with Civil War coming out next month, and I just HAD to write a Stucky fic. Nevermind that I have a million other things to be doing 8'D

****First:**** This fic has a playlist on 8tracks! The name is the same as the fic's, and my username is JolieMariella, so give it a listen! ;D

****Second:**** Despite being mostly fluff, this fic is already rather long, haha, 26k and counting from publishing, though I am close to finishing. So, look forward to it!

****Third: ****Please make sure to leave a comment if you enjoyed! They really do help me keep up the drive to write! Knowing that other people are out there enjoying something I've put hours and hours of my life into is kind of a big deal and lets me know I'm not just typing into the void here, hah.

****Fourth: ****Thanks so much to my sister and Beta, nighttimelights (nighttimesounds on tumblr). Goodness knows she's got more than enough on her plate, but she still helps me out, and I super appreciate that.

* * *

><p>The Times They Are A Changin'

Chapter One: It began with a wedding

The spring day was bright and clear as Steve strode down a busy street in the heart of New York City. It was still early enough in the season that he kept his hands shoved deep into the pockets of his leather jacket, though not quite cold enough to merit gloves or a hat warmer than his favorite blue baseball cap.

He stopped at a small coffee shop and stepped inside. The girl behind the register smiled at him, and he responded in kind.

"What can I get for you today?" She asked brightly as she pushed a lock of long, dark hair back out of her face.

Steve glanced up at the menu board mounted behind the counter for a moment, seeming to mull over his options before eventually saying, "I'll take a sixteen ounce latte with an extra shot, and-" he paused, frowning absently before looking back down at the girl and asking, "What kind of drip coffee do you have?"

"Oh loads; exotic brews are our speciality!" The barista said so perkily that the man wondered if maybe she hadn't been drinking a few too many cups of coffee herself. Still, he supposed it came with the territory.

Before he could make any sort of reply, the young woman began listing off a rather impressive array of options.

"We have Rwanda rushashi, Bolivia caranavi, Columbia huila, Mexico chiapas, french roast, trieste caffe-"

Steve held up a hand to stop her before the girl ran out of fingers to count the types out on.

"Uh, how about you pick?" He suggested with a chuckle "So long as it's a dark coffee, it'll be fine."

The barista blinked at him in surprise, then broke out into a broad smile. "Sure! What size would you like on that one?"

"Better make it a twenty ounce," Steve mused as he thought of the drink's intended recipient, a small smile playing across his features.

"Right, so that's a medium latte with an extra shot, and a large trieste caffe drip coffee," the woman repeated as her fingers danced across the keys of the register and rang up the total. Steve paid in cash, then stepped along the bar to wait for his order, hands clasped loosely behind his back.

His drinks appeared in short order, but when he went to grab them, he felt a little seed of dread take root and blossom in his gut. He recognized the look the girl behind the bar was giving him, and it rarely portended anything good.

"Hey, you look kinda familiar," she began, compelling Steve to drag

the bill of his cap down to block her view of his face.

"Yeah, I get that a lot. Just have one of those faces, I guess," He said briskly with a noncommittal smile and shoved a few dollars into the tip jar on the counter before grabbing his drinks. "Thanks," he called back to the baffled woman as he nabbed a few sugar packets and a stir stick, then hurried out the door into the brisk spring air.

Steve's long stride carried him quickly across the street and down several city blocks before he turned and ventured into the depths of Central Park. This time of year, the trees were covered in the soft, green haze of new growth, and a few early blooming flowers were already starting to crop up around the path he walked down.

On a bench in the distance sat a familiar figure, just where Steve had left him several minutes earlier, and the first Avenger found himself picking up his pace a little as the end of his quest came into view.

Bucky Barnes sat on the bench, apparently watching the large group of people gathering in the grassy clearing across the way. Chairs had been set up in neat, orderly lines, and at their head was a white picket arch that several women were arranging flowers and garlands on. They appeared to be at the end of their task, though, and already others were gathering and beginning to take their seats.

A less experienced man might have thought that he'd gotten the drop on the former Winter Soldier, but Steve knew better. Even from this angle he could tell that his friend was on edge; what was more, he knew there was someone coming up behind him. He didn't move or tense in any fashion to give this away, but still, Cap knew. He also recognized the moment Bucky registered that it was a friend approaching, as something about the air around him changed and relaxed subtly.

Though he couldn't see his friend's face, Steve knew that he had entered what Natasha started calling Bucky's 'Winter Soldier screen-saver mode'. He hadn't found the joke particularly funny, but he had to admit that it was an apt description of the stoic silences his friend often lapsed into, particularly when no one else was around.

It had taken him nearly two years to track his oldest friend down after the fall of S.H.I.E.L.D., even with Sam's help. The Winter Soldier had lead them on a merry chase across the world before they'd cornered him, and capturing him had proved even more difficult.

Still, they'd succeeded and brought Bucky back to the new Avenger's compound in the wake of Ultron's defeat. Though they hadn't realized it at the time, that was when the hard part began.

The rehabilitation of the Winter Soldier back into the man known as Bucky Barnes was a slow, agonizing process for everyone involved. Slowly but surely, though, the friend Steve had thought he'd lost that day in the alps over seventy years ago was coming back to him.

Bucky still had his moments when he would look around and obviously

have no idea where he was, or what he was doing, but they were becoming more and more infrequent with time, as was his propensity for reacting with violence when he 'blanked', as the team had come to call it. He had gotten to the point that he would come on short missions with them, though never 'officially', as an Avenger. Bucky's existence among them was a closely guarded secret, even from Tony.

Steve still wasn't entirely sure why he hadn't told Stark about Bucky. It was a gut feeling he was working off of, and those feelings had never lead him astray in the past. Something was coming. It felt like a war; sometimes Steve felt as though he could smell it on the breeze. That old familiar scent of gunpowder and smoke, of blood and fear.

For now, though, his focus was all on his oldest friend. Rehabilitation had progressed from getting Bucky to a point that he could get through a day without relapsing and trying to kill everyone in his general vicinity, to introducing him to the twenty-first century via carefully planned outings to experience the strange new world he had awoken in.

It was fun and oddly therapeutic for Steve to walk someone else down the same confusing road he'd had to tread himself just a few years previous. Pop culture, technology, recent history...it was a lot to take in, and Cap was dead set on making it at least a little easier for Bucky to adjust than it had been for him.

"Here," Steve said, lightly tapping his friend's shoulder with the bottom of the paper cup of coffee he'd brought for the man.

Bucky looked around at the cup, and then up at Steve himself, a rare smile flashing across his features as the heady scent of fresh brewed coffee caught his nose.

"Thanks," he said and reached up with a hand to accept the beverage, then asked, "Did you remember the-" several packets of sugar and a stir stick immediately followed the cup, and a small, amused snort escaped Bucky as he accepted them.

"Just who do you think you're talking to?" Steve teased him as he took a seat on the bench next to his friend, a boyish grin on his face. He took a sip of his latte as Bucky popped the lid off his drink, then proceeded to empty all four sugar packets into the cup and stir it all together. The resulting garbage was wadded up and tossed with effortless precision into a nearby bin before the lid was returned to its place, and the coffee tested.

A grateful sigh escaped the former soldier after his first sip, making Steve smile again.

"That good?" He asked between sips of his own drink, pulling his eyes from the unfolding wedding ceremony. People still appeared to be finding their seats while a dj, stationed off to one side, played some filler music to signal those who hadn't noticed that the event was about to begin.

"Not bad," Bucky said with a nod, pushing absently at a stray strand of hair that had escaped the half ponytail he'd dragged it into that morning at Natasha's suggestion.

Sam had made distressed, disapproving sounds at the 'demi-manbun' the spy inflicted on their teammate, but Romanov had told him to stuff it, and she wasn't the type one argued with on a whim. Even Bucky had picked up that lesson quick once he was recovered enough to keep his days straight.

"What is it?" The dark haired man asked as he glanced down at the cup, as though he might find the answer printed on the lid.

Steve frowned a little as he tried to recall the list of gibberish the barista had parroted at him while placing his order.

"A...trieste caffe?" He replied after a moment, face screwed up in his uncertainty. His memory was generally impeccable, but he actually doubted whether or not he remembered correctly for a change.

Bucky arched a brow at him "Did you just make that up?" He asked and took another sip.

"No!" Steve objected "I'm pretty sure that's what she said it was called."

"Wow, and here I thought that super soldier serum was supposed to enhance your brain as _well _as your muscles," the other man drawled.

"Hey, come on," Steve grumbled, shoving Bucky lightly with one arm "At least _I _know how to work the tv remote," he shot back.

The dark haired man turned sharply to look at him, eyes narrowed as he took in his friend's teasing grin. "I can too work the remote, punk!"

"Sure, Buck, whatever you say," Steve said, turning his gaze back to the wedding as he tried and failed to suppress his smile.

Bucky grumbled resentfully under his breath, though he lacked the high ground to actually argue the point.

An unusual side effect of Winter Soldier's Hydra brainwashing was that certain skills had been programmed into his subconscious, even as memories and conscious thoughts had been thoroughly repressed. Such skills included working with modern technology, and even Hydra's own hyper-advanced tech, piloting any number of aircraft, and who _knew _what else. The odd part, though, was that Bucky could only occasionally remember any of these skills. They had found, through trial and error, that the less he thought about it, the more easily a task came to him.

Hence how he could competently fly an apache helicopter one day, and be completely baffled by a tv remote the next. He was quickly learning the basics, though, and Steve wouldn't be able to tease him on the matter much longer.

"The city's change a lot," Bucky observed out of the blue. His attention on the distant patch of skyline visible over the surrounding trees.

"Well, it has been seventy years, Buck," Steve mused, cup of coffee cradled gently in his large hands to warm them against the chill air.

"Yeah," his friend admitted and took a drink of his obtusely named beverage. "Still smells the same as ever, though," he added after a moment. "Like piss and cars and old hot dogs."

Steve threw his head back and laughed, his reaction bringing a smile to Bucky's face once more.

Wiping tears of mirth from his eyes, the man admitted, "Yeah, well, I guess some things never change. The world has to have _some _constants."

"New York City's unique odor being one of them," Bucky added with a snort.

The music at the little wedding gathering suddenly changed, and though it wasn't the traditional march playing, people were beginning to walk down the aisle, arm in arm.

"Looks like it's finally starting," Steve remarked aloud, and Bucky grunted in reply. Though his friend feigned disinterest, he could see that he was watching all the same. So, rather than suggest that they move on like he had initially planned, Cap settled back against the bench and watched as well.

The groom stood nervously next to the officiant, hands folded before him as he waited for the last of the wedding party to take their places to either side of him. Then, the last couple stepped up to the head of the aisle, pausing for dramatic effect as everyone turned to look at them, smiles on faces, and cameras flashing. The man was dressed in a white tuxedo, and his partner, an older woman nearing fifty, wore a pale pink dress with her fair hair piled ornately atop her head.

"She's a bit old for him, don't you think?" Bucky remarked as he looked between the woman and the groom, who certainly appeared to be half her age.

Steve glanced at his friend, amusement and surprise flitting across his features. He opened his mouth to say something, then closed it again before finally making up his mind and saying, "Pretty sure she's not the bride."

"Then who _is_?" Bucky asked, shooting him a skeptical look "Don't tell me they changed up weddings while I was out, too."

"Well," Steve began, a smile pulling at his lips "maybe just a little."

Bucky turned back to the ceremony as his friend nodded in that direction, annoyed by the man's vagary. It was quickly forgotten, though, when the woman in the pink dress stepped to one side, and rather than her partner handing her over to the groom, she took his hand and proffered it to the man in the black tuxedo.

Steve watched as Bucky's expression twisted from annoyance, into confusion, then rapidly ran the gambit from horror to fear and

paranoia.

"But they can't-" he began, twisting at the waist to look around, though his companion was unsure what it was he expected to find, other than himself. He had gone pale, and might have jumped up if Steve hadn't placed a steadying hand on his shoulder. Bucky snapped around to look at him, and his friend was taken aback by the array of emotion he saw in the other man's eyes. It was the most worked up he had seen him get in months.

"Deep breath, Buck," Steve said soothingly, suddenly regretting that he hadn't given his friend more of a heads up when he had realized just what sort of wedding they were about to witness.

"But they're-" the former soldier began as his eyes went back to the ceremony, heavy brow furrowed. "But it's-" he tried again, but the word 'illegal' died before it made it past his lips. It occurred to him then that his friend would hardly be sitting by so casually if the union unfolding before them were still illegal. In fact, he doubted the wedding would be occurring in the middle of central park _at all_, were that still the case.

"It's love, pure and simple," Steve said when Bucky had shut his mouth with an audible snap "The world can never have enough of that, I think."

The smile on Steve's face was warm, and just a little bit wistful, lighting up his blue eyes as he watched the happy couple stand hand-in-hand at the altar. He'd always had a way of saying stuff like that, and it drove Bucky up the wall. It was _so damn sappy_, but the man was just so _earnest_ about it that you couldn't do anything but agree whole-heartedly. Times like these always left him torn between wanting to punch his friend, and an overwhelming desire to

The soldier shook himself mentally and turned his attention back to Steve, who was still smiling beneficently at the scene playing out before them.

Though they couldn't hear from where they sat, the wedding officiant seemed to be speaking with great passion to the people gathered before him, and smiling widely at the couple themselves. He went on this way for several minutes as the pair watched, the one relaxed, and the other still on edge, as though he expected the police to show up at any moment. Then, the grooms turned to one another, smiling and perhaps a little tearful (it was difficult to tell at that distance), and kissed. The gesture was sweet, and chaste at first, until the man in the white tux threw his arms around his new husband's neck and dragged him in for something more intimate.

Bucky turned away from the display, attention locked on his coffee to mask the sudden turbulence of emotion that rose within him. He finished his drink off and tossed the cup into the garbage, then pushed himself to his feet and started walking back the way they had come.

Steve didn't seem overly surprised by his actions, and simply followed suit, matching his stride as he allowed his friend a chance to process what they had just seen. He did, however, glance back over his shoulder before they went around a bend in the path, and witnessed the happy couple walking back down the aisle

arm-in-arm.

Still smiling to himself, Steve hummed the tune the couple had played in place of their wedding march. The song was unfamiliar to him, but he quite liked it; he would have to try and find out what it was later.

When they came to the edge of the park, Bucky automatically turned left to head back to where they had left the car, but his friend paused.

"Hey, I know we went and saw my old place last time we were down here," he began, bringing Bucky up short. "You want to go find yours?" Cap suggested brightly, clearly entertained by the idea.

Bucky hesitated, and the other man allowed him his moment to mull the decision over. He realized it was a lot to ask of him, so he didn't push it one way or the other.

"Alright, sure," the former soldier said eventually. "I'm curious," he admitted when Steve lit up at his acquiescence, "if that old hole in the wall you used to live in is a million dollar apartment these days, imagine what mine turned into."

* * *

><p>Author's Note: Thanks for reading! Please do drop a comment, I absolutely love them!

2. Reach for the Sky

****Author's Note:**** So I make a joke about Steve's driving in this chapter that I can only attribute to a headcanon post I found on Tumblr awhile back. It was actually backed up by a rather interesting history lesson about how careless the army was about assigning people jeeps during WWII. I wish I could find it again, it was pretty damn hilarious.

Thanks, as per usual, to my sister, nighttimelights for the beta!

Also, make sure to check out the 8tracks playlist that goes with the fic! It shares a title with the fic, and my username there is joliemariella.

Remember to drop a review if you enjoy! I feed them to my voracious muse so I can churn out more fanfic XD Don't let her go hungry!

* * *

><p>The Times They Are A Changin'
****Chapter Two: Reach for the Sky**

The pair made their way to the nearest subway station and managed to navigate their way north towards Bucky's old apartment. On the ride, the ex-soldier couldn't help but note the strange dichotomy of the subway system itself. Old and new melded together as they roared through stations that had first been constructed in the early

nineteen-hundreds in a train car built in the twenty-first century.

Past and present blurred on that interminable ride, and if he closed his eyes Bucky could pretend it was still 1938 and he was dragging a much smaller Steve Rogers out for a night of dancing.

God, he used to love dancing.

Beside him Steve shifted, and Bucky felt the train lurch and begin to slow as it rolled into the station. Gray eyes opened and looked around warily, as though to check if anyone had noticed his lapse in attention.

Whether Steve had or not, he made no comment, just said "Looks like this is our stop," and made his way to the door.

Bucky followed suit, allowing his taller friend to make a path through the mob of people that thronged on the station platform. It was a stop that hadn't existed back in his day, but as they surfaced at street level, the man found himself wishing it had. It let out only a few blocks from where his apartment had been.

After that initial wistful moment, though, Bucky felt a sense of dread well up within him as he looked around.

"Oh," Steve said aloud as he too took in their surroundings.

'Oh' hardly covered it in Bucky's book. His neighborhood, while not the best, had still been a decent one back in the late thirties. Since then, though, while Steve's apartment in the worst part of the Bronx had skyrocketed in value, his had apparently dropped to the bottom of the barrel.

"You have got to be kidding me," he grumbled and began stalking down the street.

Steve winced, and hurried to catch him up, once again regretting the way all of his suggestions today had thrown his friend into uncomfortable situations.

As they walked, Steve examined the buildings they passed. He remembered many of them, but others had been torn down and replaced in the last seventy years. The dance hall down the street from Bucky's place had been demolished and replaced with a now seedy looking McDonald's, and he was pretty sure that the pub across the way was an adult store of some kind.

Miraculously, the old brown stone Bucky's apartment had been in still stood, but it was run down, with more than one broken window facing the street. A rather unsavory looking group of young men lounged on the stoop, eyeing the pair of them warily where they stood on the opposite side of the street.

Steve's attention was all for Bucky, though, watching the shorter man as he stared at the place he had once called home with an unreadable expression on his face.

Eventually, the ex-soldier said "Let's go," and spun on heel to head back the way they had come.

The blond hurried after once again, following as Bucky, lost in thought, took a detour down a narrow alley, operating on a deeply ingrained habit from decades before when the neighborhood had been a safer place.

"Hey, Buck, I'm sorry about-" Steve began as he matched his friend's pace, an unhappy frown on his face as his words trailed off, unable to quite express just what he was thinking.

Bucky glanced over at him, then shrugged and waved off his concern. "I guess I'm not really surprised. Even back when I lived here the area was on the decline," he admitted reluctantly, hands shoved deep into his coat pockets.

Despite that knowledge, Steve knew it must still have come as a shock to see the change all at once. He knew that _he _was surprised by it, and it hadn't even been his home.

"Yeah, well," he began, only to be cut off by a young man stepping in front of them from the shadows of a dumpster.

"Give me your wallets and no one gets hurt," the stranger said, waving a pistol menacingly at them both.

Eyes darting sideways, Steve could see Bucky's frown turn into a scowl, prompting him to reach out and place a hand on the other man's shoulder. His friend tensed at the contact and didn't look around at him, but he did stop his advance towards the boy threatening them with a gun he clearly knew little about.

When he was sure Bucky wasn't about to jump the kid, Steve released his hold on him and put both his hands in the air. His friend huffed in annoyance, but followed his lead all the same.

"Now son, how about you just put that down and we all go our own ways, no harm no foul?" Steve suggested in a calm tone, expression solemn but un-threatening as he made eye contact with their mugger, appearing to pay the gun between them no mind.

"Yeah right," the kid scoffed, jerking the pistol a little as he repeated himself. "Wallets, now."

Bucky twitched, but Steve only carefully lowered his hands and reached into his back pocket and pulled out his wallet as commanded. His friend shot him an incredulous look out of the corner of his eye, but he ignored it as he flipped his billfold open and began pulling out his ID and credit cards.

The mugger noticed this and said "Nuh-uh, leave it all in. You don't get to fuckin' pick and choose."

Steve looked up at the other man, still completely calm "Come on, you know I'll have these cards canceled within five minutes of you being on your way. There's a hundred dollars cash in here, plus whatever he has," he said, nodding towards Bucky.

The mugger seemed to think it over for a moment before saying "Fine, whatever, hurry it up."

Bucky himself gave Steve a look that said he was mad, but after a moment, he sighed hugely and pulled out his own wallet, grumbling "This is a new level of stupid, Steve."

The ex-soldier produced thirty-six dollars from his beat-up wallet and passed it to his friend with a fierce glower. Steve added the bills to his own, then closed the billfold and offered it to the boy holding them at gunpoint.

Bucky nearly scoffed aloud when the kid actually stepped forward to take the wallet instead of insisting Steve put it on the ground and back up, making him think that this was probably his first time trying armed robbery. Granted, against a normal civilian, it probably wouldn't have mattered, but the boy could hardly have anticipated Steve's superhuman reflexes. Even Bucky had a hard time tracking what the super-soldier did next.

As their mugger pulled the wallet from Steve's right hand, pistol still held at arms-length (at least, Bucky thought, the idiot wasn't holding it sideways as seemed to be a trend these days), his friend used his left to twist the gun out of his grip and tossed it to Bucky in one fluid movement.

The shorter man caught it deftly with his left hand and ejected the clip, which he then pocketed. Bucky stared their mugger down with dark eyes and a grim expression as he then crushed the pistol into an unusable hunk of twisted metal that he tossed into the nearby dumpster.

The utter look of horror on the boy's face nearly made the whole exchange worth it as he turned tail and fled down the alley without a word. It wasn't until a moment later than he realized the kid had still managed to make off with Steve's wallet and all their cash.

"I cannot believe you just let that kid mug us," Bucky complained as he glared up at Steve.

His friend just shrugged, smile pulling at his lips as he said "Eh, he's just a kid, and that's one more gun off the streets. Leave him be. Don't you remember some of the stuff we got up to at that age?"

Bucky scoffed "You've never mugged anyone in your life."

"Well, no," Steve admitted. "No one who wasn't a Nazi, anyways," he amended after a moment's consideration.

And there it was again, that divisive feeling of wanting to hit Steve, or something else entirely that Bucky could never bring himself to put much thought into.

As usual, he shook it off, then snorted and said, "Come on, let's go. I think I've had enough of New York for the day."

"Sure," Steve said, smiling at him as they started walking again, avoiding taking any further alley shortcuts once they made it out of the first.

The pair lapsed into a comfortable silence on their trip back that wasn't broken until they made it to the car.

As they both got in and buckled up, Steve said "I was thinking we could pick up dinner for everyone on the way back. I think Scott and Hope will be stopping by tonight."

Bucky quirked a brow at his friend as he started the car. It was a habit now, for Steve to ride shotgun when they went out together, because if he didn't ride shotgun, the ex-soldier refused to go anywhere with him. He still had no idea how Steve had managed to land himself a driver's license since waking up in the twenty-first century, but Bucky was utterly convinced he'd never had any sort of driving lessons. He'd been terrible at driving anything bigger than a motorcycle back in their army days; but then, the Army had had so many jeeps on deployment that they'd been willing to throw one at literally anyone. Even kids fresh out of Brooklyn that had never been behind the wheel of anything bigger than a bicycle their entire life.

The running joke in the platoons had been that Americans blew up more jeeps than Nazis did.

Natasha seemed to be the only person that understood Bucky's reluctance to be in a car with Steve behind the wheel. They would share looks behind Steve's back when he suggested going anywhere, deciding in unspoken code which one of them would go with him to keep the man out of trouble.

"That Chinese place on the way back is pretty good," Steve continued.

"You gave away all our money," Bucky pointed out with a roll of his eyes as he backed the car out and pulled into the street, merging smoothly with city traffic. Unlike his friend, he had learned to drive long before he'd ever joined the army or become the Winter Soldier. Even with the newer, faster cars, he had adapted quickly, Hydra conditioning or no.

"I kept my credit card!" His friend objected, frowning at him as he fished in his pocket and dragged out the cards he had pulled out of his wallet before handing it over to their mugger. "I did like that wallet, though," he added ruefully, speaking mostly to himself as he sorted through the little plastic rectangles, organizing them in order of importance, with his ID on top.

Glancing over at the man as they sat at a stop light, Bucky reached into his pocket and pulled out his own wallet, which was now completely empty without his cash. He'd yet to commit to a credit card (considering he wasn't even supposed to exist, there was going to have to be an entire fake identity made before he could acquire any number of things), so the cash was all he had kept in it.

Bucky tossed the beat up, black leather rectangle into Steve's lap as the light changed and he turned his eyes back to the road.

"It's alright, Buck, I can get another one," Steve said, trying to offer the wallet back. His friend had so few things to his name, that even taking something so small as his wallet felt distinctly wrong.

"Just use it and give it back later," the dark haired man said as he

shifted gears and merged onto the highway. "Not like I need it anyways," he added, ignoring his friend's hand as he tried to give it back.

Steve hesitated, then withdrew his hand, fingers brushing over the age-worn leather as he proceeded to slot his various cards into its pockets.

Before he could say thank you, Bucky said, "No where's this Chinese place you wanted to go to?"

Cap looked up from his task and smiled "I'll tell you when to turn."

* * *

><p>Author's Note: Thanks for reading! Please consider taking thirty seconds out of your day to drop a review, they really make my day!

3. Captain Roger's Neighborhood

**Author's Note: **I don't know why, but I would have sworn I had this chapter posted already, lol. This is what happens when you publish way behind where you're actually at in the writing I guess, heh.

Once again, thanks to my beta nighttimelights for keeping my commas in check and my phrasing precise. And please don't forget to drop a review if you enjoyed, they really make my day and keep me chugging along on this project!

* * *

><p>The Times They Are A Changin'
>Chapter Three: Captain Roger's Neighborhood<p>

"So, how did the man-date go?" Natasha asked as she helped Steve clear the table of chinese take-out refuse. "He seemed quiet tonight. Even for him."

Steve ignored the date comment, but had to agree with the red-head's observation on how quiet Bucky had been at dinner. It wasn't uncommon that he would go an entire 'family' meal without speaking, but it was becoming increasingly rare as time went on. These days he would do more than grunt at questions on how his day had been from their teammates. He was even getting to the point that he would crack the occasional joke, something Steve appreciated more than he thought Bucky might realize. His friend had always had a good sense of humor, even if it had leaned towards the sarcastic, verging on the macabre once the war started. Seeing it begin to resurface now gave Cap hope that Bucky could one day regain some form of normalcy more than anything else.

He gave Natasha's question some thought, mulling over their day before finally answering, "Good, I think. We saw a wedding in Central Park."

"Oh?" The redhead asked, arching a brow that invited more

information.

"A gay wedding," Steve clarified with a small smile of amusement.

"_Oh,_" Natasha said, eyebrows going up at this news. "I see. And is he...okay with that?" She asked, watching the man across from her curiously as she wiped down the table.

Steve went thoughtful for a long minute, and she allowed him time to think as he finished gathering up various take-out boxes and abandoned chopsticks, then threw them in the trash can.

The joined kitchen/dining room set aside for residents of the Avengers compound was quite spacious, but seemed significantly less so when they got the entire team together for dinner like they had that evening. It was empty but for them at the moment, though. Vision had insisted on a few team exercises with Ant-Man and Wasp while Steve and Natasha had drawn the short straws on cleaning duty. Though, granted, at least no actual cooking had been done that night.

"He's not against it," Steve answered eventually, then paused and looked at Natasha, brow furrowed seriously as he said "It's just...you have to understand, growing up in the nineteen-thirties..."

His words trailed off, but she caught his meaning, and what he was trying to say. It was a different time.

"Right, no, I got you," she replied quickly with a smile, her way of reassuring him that she didn't think less of Bucky for him being thrown by the idea of open and legal gay marriage. "Homosexuality was illegal in the thirties, wasn't it?" She asked, trying to recall long past history lessons. Her school, specialized as it had been, hadn't exactly focused on civil rights.

The large man nodded as he stuffed the last of the trash into the bin and pulled the full bag out, tightening the drawstrings and tying them in a solid knot.

"He'll be fine once he's had time to process," Steve said confidently, smiling over at Natasha as she finished up the table. "I think this is one of the biggest changes he's had to come to terms with so far, is all. It was hard for me too."

Romanov gave him a skeptical look, clearly not buying the idea of Captain America having trouble acclimating to positive changes in civil rights.

"It was!" He objected, blushing a little at her obvious doubt. "Maybe not the way it would be for some people-"

"Most people," Natasha clarified, throwing a dish towel at him with a smile "Face it, you're the most accepting person this side of the Kingdom of Make-believe."

Steve just looked at her, clearly missing her Mr. Roger's Neighborhood reference. The spy sighed, figuring it had been too much to hope that he'd be familiar with daytime children's tv

shows.

"Anyways," he continued "Tech is easy to get a grip on once you've got the basics, but seventy years of social and political changes took a bit longer."

In the end, all Natasha could do was acquiesce the point to him. After all, he was the one who had actually lived through it. Even if he did seem as though he had adapted flawlessly to modern day progressiveness, that didn't mean that it didn't take some effort on his part to wrap his brain around the twenty-first century way of doing things.

"Well, what else did you boys get up to? You didn't just sit and watch some stranger's wedding that whole time you were out like some sort of weird creepers, did you?" Natasha asked with a grin as they gathered up the dirty glassware and divided up the last of the cleaning duties. She set about washing them while he dried and put them in the cabinet. They could have simply put them in the dishwasher, but neither was in a hurry to join the others for a practice session right after eating a full course of greasy, if delicious, chinese food.

"No," he said with a snort. "We took the subway uptown to find his old apartment."

His grimace told Natasha all she needed to know about how that had gone.

"I'm guessing his neighborhood didn't age as gracefully as yours did."

"Definitely not."

She answered with a quiet 'ah' that turned strangled when Steve added, "We got mugged."

Gasping for breath as she hit herself on the sternum to force herself to breathe, Natasha said, "I'm sorry, I thought you said that you got _mugged._"

"We did," Steve replied, grinning at the absurdity of his completely honest statement while his friend gaped at him. "Kid took all our cash, but I talked him into letting me keep my cards."

"How-" she began, then raised a hand to stop him from answering. "No, _why. _Yes, _why _did you let a kid mug you?"

"Who had the balls to mug Captain-freaking-America?" Scott asked as he ducked into the kitchen, having apparently overheard their conversation from the hall.

"Some punk kid, apparently. Trust me, I am simply _dying _to know what sort of skills this boy had that he was able to get away with both Captain America and the Winter Soldier's cash. Obviously we need to recruit him." Natasha said, tone still disbelieving.

Scott whistled his appreciation as he took a freshly dried glass from Steve's hand and proceeded to fill it with water. He took a sip, then gestured for him to continue the story as he leaned casually against

the counter, clearly intent on staying put until he heard the whole of it.

Steve rolled his eyes and related the tale, and by the end of it both Scott and Natasha had devolved into gales of laughter.

"Ooh I wish I could have been there to see that kid's freaking face when soldier-boy crushed his gun. Holy shit," the other man wheezed.

"Poor Bucky," Natasha said as she wiped tears of mirth from her eyes. "You're the only person he'd do that for, you know," she said, chuckling at her friend.

"Oh hell yeah," Scott agreed immediately as he got himself under control and took another sip of his water. "Anyone else that told him not to beat the tar out of that kid woulda found that gun shoved so far up their-"

"Scott, are you in here?"

The man winced and ducked behind Steve, who looked to the door in time to see Hope enter, obviously looking for her boyfriend. His attempt to hide himself behind his fellow Avenger proved far from effective as she glared at him through Cap, fists planted on her hips.

"Scott, we're supposed to be training with Vision and Wanda right now, come on. Don't you dare ditch me in there!" She chided him sharply, angular eyes narrowed.

"How can he expect us to be running around doing stuff after all that chinese food?!" Her boyfriend demanded, peeking around Steve's much larger frame to meet Hope's gaze. "It was some sort of horrible trap - I think I'm gonna puke."

Hope rolled her eyes expressively. "I _told _you not to eat so many egg rolls," she said, clearly pitiless as she reached around Steve with a polite "Excuse me," grabbed Scott, then proceeded to drag him out of the room.

"Cap, for god's sake, save me!" The man cried dramatically as he was dragged away.

Suppressing his own laughter now, Steve snapped off a sharp salute and said, "Good luck in there, soldier. Stay strong."

"Romanov, avenge me!"

"Yeah, I'll get right on that, soon as she kills you," Natasha replied as Hope and Scott disappeared back down the hall.

When their teammates cries for help had finally died away, Natasha turned to Steve and said, "So don't forget, we've got that charity ball of Tony's to go to day after tomorrow."

Cap groaned and tossed aside his dish towel. "I'd kinda hoped you'd forgotten," he admitted with a rueful smile when she arched a brow at him.

"I _never _forget," the redhead said and poked him in the chest. "Which means dancing lessons are on for tomorrow, sir. You will _not _be crushing my feet during the opening ceremony tomorrow, got it?"

"Yes ma'am," he answered with a wince, absently rubbing the place she had jabbed.

* * *

><p>It was late when Steve eventually made his way to bed. He and Natasha had both wound up being dragged into the tail end of Vision's training session, and then Scott had insisted on everyone having a beer together as a 'bonding exercise' after so much hard work. It had been fun, though Bucky's presence had been missed. Wanda had gone to fetch him, but had apparently been met with staunch refusal when she invited him to join them for a beer.<p>

Concern for his friend pushed Steve to deviate from his course towards bed. He instead went to the end of the side hall where Bucky had taken up residence. None of the other rooms in this hall had been taken thus far, which he assumed was why his friend had chosen a room there.

To his surprise the door to Bucky's room was actually half-open, which he took as an unspoken invitation to open it further. The other man never left his door ajar otherwise.

Bucky sat cross-legged on the floor, pieces of his favorite rifle laid out neatly on a blanket as he carefully cleaned each and every piece using the tools from the kit at his side. He didn't look up when the door swung quietly open, or when Steve leaned casually against the door frame, arms folded over his chest.

Cap watched his friend for a long minute, not wanting to interrupt him as he worked with the small, delicate parts of the trigger piece. Besides, there was something oddly calming about observing Bucky's precise movements as he disassembled the mechanism, wiped it down, and then meticulously reassembled it. It had always been that way back during the war, though. Cleaning his rifle had become such a meditative activity for the man that he would do it even if his gun was still pristine from its last disassembling. Steve and the other commandos would always tease him about the habit, but he had always shrugged them off.

"Pretty sure it's clean, Buck," Steve said with a smile once the other man had re-installed the trigger piece, his words echoing those he had spoken so many times in the past in tents on the warfront or undercover behind enemy lines.

"Cleanliness is next to godliness, and we need all the help we can get," Bucky responded without thinking. He then paused, brow furrowed as the words registered.

When he looked up at his friend, Steve was beaming at him.

"Old habits die hard, huh?" The blond man remarked, still grinning. Hearing his friend's old, familiar come-back to his teasing made him happier than he could say.

The other man's warm, clearly pleased smile made Bucky's heart pound alarmingly when he saw it. Steve practically lit up the room when he smiled like that. It made one feel as though everything were right in the world and nothing could possibly go wrongâ€¦

"Apparently," Bucky admitted gruffly, but was unable to repress a small smile of his own. How could anyone resist the urge when Captain America looked at them like that. "Did you need something?" He asked as he turned his attention back to his rifle.

Steve straightened and said, "I was just heading to bed, actually. Figured I'd say goodnight."

Bucky nodded, attention still on the scattered pieces of his rifle. "Goodnight," he replied.

His friend lingered there for a moment, and the ex-soldier found himself holding his breath, waiting for Steve to say something else. He didn't though, just nodded and turned to leave.

"Steve," Bucky said, looking up in time to see the other man poke his head back around the door frame, eyebrows raised in question.

"Yeah?"

"Er," he hesitated awkwardly for a moment, then said, "Thanks." The way Steve tilted his head in question told the man he'd have to clarify, though, so he cleared his throat and added "For today, I mean. It was..." His face screwed up in thought as he tried to land on the right word for the afternoon they had spent together. "Nice," he finally decided.

The discomfort proved worth it when Steve fixed him with another one of his very brightest smiles.

"No problem," the blond said, relieved that Bucky had apparently worked his way through any initial hang-up he might have had about the wedding they had witnessed, and had a good time. "Maybe next time we'll go for shawarma."

Bucky raised an eyebrow at his friend. "What the hell is shawarma?"

* * *

><p>Author's Note: Obligatory shawarma joke is obligatory. I have no excuse.

End
file.